

Message Text

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R 151217Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0220
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONCUL MADRAS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CGEN, APER, IN
SUBJECT: CONSULAR POSITIONS FOR INDIA

1. IN SUBMITTING THEIR FY 80 CONSULAR PACKAGES EMBASSY NEW DELHI AND CONGENS BOMBAY AND MADRAS OUTLINED THEIR REQUIREMENTS FOR ADDITIONAL CONSULAR POSITIONS, BOTH AMERICAN AND LOCAL, IN LIGHT OF THEIR PRESENT AND ANTICIPATED CONSULAR WORKLOADS. THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES ADDITIONAL RATIONALE IN SUPPORT OF THESE REQUESTS AND LISTS THEM IN ORDER OF PRIORITY.

2. WITHIN RECENT MONTHS CONSULAR OPERATIONS IN INDIA, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO VISAS, HAVE TAKEN ON STEADILY INCREASING POLITICAL IMPORTANCE. ON THE OCCASION OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT TO INDIA IN JANUARY, PRIME MINISTER DESAI RAISED WITH THE PRESIDENT THE PROBLEMS INDIAN EXPERIENCE IN SEEKING STUDENT VISAS. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE EMBASSY, THE DEPARTMENT AND THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT HAVE ACTIVELY BEEN EXPLORING VARIOUS WAYS OF ALLEVIATING THIS IRRITANT TO IMPROVING INDO-U.S. RELATIONS.

3. THE VISA PROBLEM IS ONLY ONE MANIFESTATION, ALTHOUGH AD-

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MITTEDLY THE MOST POLITICALLY CHARGED, OF THE STEADILY INCREASING INTERCHANGE BETWEEN INDIA AND THE U.S. AMERICAN TOURIST TRAVEL TO INDIA IS ON THE RISE. INDIA HAS BECOME ONE OF THE TOP FIVE COUNTRIES FOR IMMIGRATION TO THE U.S. AS MORE AND MORE INDIANS BECOME PERMANENT RESIDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES, THERE WILL BE GREATER PRESSURE FOR BOTH NON-IMMIGRANT AND IMMIGRANT VISAS. THE U.S. REMAINS THE FIRST

CHOICE OF INDIANS SEEKING TO STUDY ABROAD.

4. THIS INCREASED INTERCHANGE SHOULD BE AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT POSITIVE ELEMENT IN A WIDENING AND DEEPENING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIA AND THE U.S., BUT IT WILL BE SO ONLY IF CONSULAR OFFICERS IN INDIA, WHO ARE SO OFTEN THE ESSENTIAL MIDDLEMEN IN THE EXCHANGE, ARE GIVEN THE RESOURCES TO DO THEIR WORK EFFICIENTLY, PROMPTLY AND COURTEOUSLY.

5. THE PROBLEMS FACED BY THE CONSULAR SECTIONS IN INDIA VARY TO SOME EXTENT BY POST, BUT ALL POSTS FACE A COMMON PROBLEM COMPOUNDED OF AN INCREASING NUMBER OF AMERICANS WHO REQUIRE PROTECTION AND WELFARE SERVICES, INCREASED DEMAND FOR BOTH IMMIGRANT AND NON-IMMIGRANT VISAS AND INCREASED CORRESPONDENCE ON VISA MATTERS. WHEN OVER-WORKED AND HARD-PRESSED CONSULAR SECTIONS ARE FORCED TO COPE WITH THIS INCREASING WORKLOAD, THE PRICE IS PAID IN TERMS OF BACKLOGGED CORRESPONDENCE, LONGER WAITING PERIODS FOR IMMIGRANT VISAS, CURSORY ADJUDICATION OF NON-IMMIGRANT VISA APPLICATIONS, AND SOMETIMES LESS THAN ADEQUATE SERVICE TO AMERICANS. THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF THE INDIVIDUAL POSTS ARE ADDRESSED BELOW, WITH THE REQUESTED POSITIONS LISTED IN DESCENDING ORDER OF PRIORITY.

6. ADDITIONAL AMERICAN POSITION FOR BOMBAY--OF FOUR AMERICAN OFFICERS CURRENTLY ASSIGNED TO THE CONSULAR SECTION TWO HAVE OTHER THAN CONSULAR DUTIES WHICH TAKE THEM FROM THE OFFICE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOR APPRECIABLE PERIODS OF TIME. ONE OFFICER MUST BACKUP AND FILL IN FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (THE ONLY AMERICAN IN ADMIN) WHICH REQUIRES 33 TO 50 PERCENT OF HIS TIME. IN ABSENCE OF THE ADMIN OFFICER HE MUST REVIEW AND SIGN SOME 20 DOCUMENTS DAILY AND ON AN URGENT BASIS RELATING TO CUSTOMS CLEARANCES, HOST GOVERNMENT PERMITS AND USG FUND OBLIGATIONS. THE SECOND OFFICER, AN FSR, HAS EXTENSIVE DUTIES RELATED TO POLITICAL AND LABOR FUNCTIONS. ADEQUATE PROCESSING OF A DAY'S BUSINESS IN THE CONSULAR SECTION REQUIRES FULL-TIME PRESENCE OF THREE AMERICAN OFFICERS. ONE ON IVS (35-40 SCHEDULED INTERVIEWS PER DAY), ONE ON NIVS, AND ONE TO HANDLE CORRESPONDENCE--200 PIECES PER WEEK INCLUDING 22 CONGRESSIONAL, AS WELL AS TO HANDLE PROTECTION AND WELFARE CASES. ADDITIONAL AMERICAN POSITION IS ENVISAGED PRIMARILY FOR U.S. CITIZENSHIP FUNCTION INCLUDING WELFARE-WHEREABOUTS, HANDLING NOTARIALS AND VISA PETITIONS AND SHIPPING/SEAMEN MATTERS; SECONDARILY TO SHORE UP NIV OPERATIONS DURING PEAK SEASON, AND THIRDLY TO ASSIST WITH IV OPERATION SO THAT ADMIN-RELATED CONSULAR OFFICER CAN FULFILL THAT IMPORTANT FUNCTION.

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7. FIRST ADDITIONAL LOCAL POSITION FOR NEW DELHI--A CLERK-TYPIST IS URGENTLY NEEDED TO COPE WITH THE CHRONIC CORRESPONDENCE AND FILING BACKLOG AND TO REDUCE PRESSURE ON HARASSED AMERICAN OFFICERS BY TAKING OVER A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THE TELEPHONE INQUIRY LOAD. PRESENT STAFF IS INADEQUATE FOR PROCESSING IV CLEARANCES FOR THIS AND OTHER POSTS AS REQUIRED BY LAW. MAIL SORTING HAS HAD TO BE FARMED OUT ON AN AD HOC BASIS, AND TEMPORARY STAFF DETAILED IN FROM TIME TO TIME FROM OTHER SECTIONS TO HEW DOWN ACCUMULATED CORRESPONDENCE BACKLOGS.

8. FIRST ADDITIONAL LOCAL POSITION FOR BOMBAY--THIS POSITION IS DESPERATELY NEEDED FOR IV FUNCTION AND TO ASSIST IN INVESTIGATIONS. MOST INVESTIGATIONS ARE REQUESTED BY INS WITH RESPECT TO APPLICATIONS FOR ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS AND ABOUT ONE QUARTER TO THEM ARE SUBJECTS OF CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST. SINCE TO DATE THREE-QUARTERS OF THE CASES INVESTIGATED CONTAIN ELEMENTS OF FRAUD, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT INVESTIGATIONS CANNOT BE WAIVED IN THE INTEREST OF STREAMLINING OPERATIONS.

9. SECOND ADDITIONAL LOCAL POSITION FOR BOMBAY--THE SECOND LOCAL POSITION WOULD GIVE CONGEN BOMBAY CONFIDENCE THAT IT

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COULD WIPE OUT THE CURRENT BACKLOG OF A SIX WEEK WAITING PERIOD IN PROCESSING OF IV APPLICANTS. THIS PERSON WOULD PRO-

CESS VISA CLEARANCES, DEAL WITH IV CORRESPONDENCE AND ASSIST IN PACKAGING IVS. IN THIS CONNECTION IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT BOMBAY HAS THE TOP IV WORKLOAD IN NEA, AND IS THIRD IN THE NIV FUNCTION, EXCEEDED ONLY BY TEL AVIV AND TEHRAN. IN FEBRUARY 1978 ALONE, NORMALLY SLOW MONTH, BOMBAY ISSUED 554 IVS--200 MORE THAN IN FEBRUARY 1977 AND AN ALL-TIME HIGH FOR THE MONTH.

10. ADDITIONAL AMERICAN POSITION FOR NEW DELHI--NEW DELHI CONSULAR SECTION NOW HAS TWO AMERICAN POSITIONS, WITH A NEW THIRD POSITION SCHEDULED TO BE FILLED THIS SUMMER. A FOURTH AMERICAN IS NEEDED TO WORK IN BOTH NON-IMMIGRANT AND IMMIGRANT VISAS. WITH THIS ADDITION, THE SECTION WOULD BE ABLE MATERIALLY TO CUT DOWN THE TIME NON-IMMIGRANT VISA APPLICANTS ARE REQUIRED TO WAIT FOR INTERVIEWS, GIVE MORE TIME TO CONTROVERSIAL NON-IMMIGRANT VISA CASES, AND KEEP IMMIGRATION VISA SCHEDULING MORE CURRENT. AS AN INDICATION OF IV WORKLOAD GROWTH, FROM 1973 TO 1976 THE IMMIGRATION VISA CASELOAD INCREASED 114 PER CENT, WITHOUT ANY INCREASE IN STAFFING.

11. SECOND ADDITIONAL LOCAL POSITION FOR NEW DELHI--AT PRESENT THE CONSULAR SECTION SIMPLY DOES NOT HAVE ENOUGH HANDS AVAILABLE TO PREPARE IMMIGRANT VISAS FOR ISSUANCE ON A SATISFACTORILY TIMELY BASIS. THE RESULTANT DELAYS ENGENDER CONSIDERABLE CORRESPONDENCE AND PRESSURE FROM GOI OFFICIALS ON BEHALF OF APPLICANTS TO SPEED UP THE PROCESS OR GIVE PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT IN TIMES OF APPOINTMENTS. THIS NEEDED POSITION WOULD IN EFFECT BE A SWING POSITION, ALTERNATING BETWEEN IMMIGRANT AND NON-IMMIGRANT VISA SECTIONS.

12. LOCAL POSITION FOR MADRAS--JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS POSITION WAS FURNISHED IN MADRAS 343.
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13. NO ADDITIONAL POSITIONS ARE REQUESTED FOR CALCUTTA.
GOHEEN

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